

## Module 1: Understanding Chronic Conditions

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### Handout G: Kid Talk

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#### **Be open and honest.**

- Let the child know you're open to talk. Encourage him to express his concerns and questions. Never make him feel that anything is too "bad" or too scary to talk about. If something is going to hurt, say so. It's easier to comfort a child who trusts you.

#### **Start from where the child starts.**

- Before launching into an explanation, ask the child what she understands. She might have wrong information and scary fantasies that you can correct. This helps build a strong base of understanding.

#### **Answer questions.**

- Take the child's questions seriously—this lets him know that you think he is important. Every question is okay; and he may even need to ask again and again. Answer as much as you can. If a question surprises or flusters you, you can say, "I need to think about it," or "I don't know, but I'll try to find out." If you promise to discuss it later, remember to do it.

#### **Keep it simple.**

- Respond to the child in simple words and short explanations. Explain as much as the child needs to know and can understand. Don't burden the child with too much information.



#### **Keep talking.**

- Let the child know that you're open to talk at any time.

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Adapted, with permission, from *Family Power: Building Skills for Families with HIV and Drug-Affected Children*. Family Welfare Research Group, Berkeley, Calif. April, 1992.

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